

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 855 without my signature.

I strongly support efforts to help people recover from drug addiction, and last year I signed legislation providing food stamp benefits to addicts in recovery. However, I cannot support this bill as it would provide cash assistance without adequate public safety protections.

California already provides resources to help meet the needs of children whose parents are ineligible for CalWORKs services because of their drug-related felony. This bill would provide cash and benefits to felony drug offenders, but does not provide adequate assurances that these individuals are abstaining from drug use. The Legislature failed to pass measures that include reasonable public safety provisions such as drug testing, use of voucher payment in lieu of cash and mandatory treatment.

Finally, I am concerned that not enough time has passed to determine whether providing food stamps to drug felons improves individuals' ability to maintain sobriety and become more self sufficient so an expansion of cash assistance at this time is premature.

For these reasons, I am returning AB 855 without my signature.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger